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Your Reference: P353105GB
Application No: GB0520991.1

20 January 2006

Dear Sirs

**Patents Act 1977:
Combined Search and Examination Report under Sections 17 and 18(3)**

Latest date for reply:

2 October 2006

I enclose two copies of my search and examination report and a copy of the citations.

By the above date you should either file amendments to meet the objections in the report or make observations on them. If you do not, the application may be refused.

Other search results

If you have applied to another patent office for a patent for this invention you will be receiving from them the results of their search. If you decide to proceed with the present application you are asked to provide me with a copy of any such official search report; or to email identifying details of the cited documents (including any category assigned in the report) to the email address above.

Cut-off date This request applies to search reports that you have received before the date when you send a response to our first examination report under section 18(3) or section 18(4); if you make no response to an initial section 18(4) report the cut-off date is two months after the date of that report. Tell us about a search report sooner rather than later if that would allow it to be considered during our first examination.

[†]Use of E-mail: Please note that e-mail should be used for correspondence only.

Exceptions You do not have to supply details of a search report that (1) shows a nil response, or (2) has been published by WIPO or EPO, or (3) you have already supplied to us on a previous GB application.

Publication

I estimate that, provided you have met all the formal requirements, preparations for publication of your application will be completed soon after **21 February 2006**. At this time you will receive a letter confirming the exact date when the preparations for publication will be completed. This letter will also tell you the publication number and date of publication of your application.

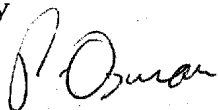
Withdrawal/amendment

If you wish to withdraw your application before it is published you must do so before the preparations for publication are complete. **WARNING** – after preparations for publication are complete it will NOT be possible to withdraw your application from publication.

If you wish to file amended claims for inclusion with the published application you must do so before the preparations for publication are completed. If you write to the Office less than 3 weeks before 21 February 2006 please mark your letter prominently:

"URGENT - PUBLICATION IMMINENT".

Yours faithfully



Mr Philip Osman
Examiner

Important information about combined search and examination

I also ask that you take note of the following points. These might have a bearing on the future stages of your application because the examination report has been sent to you before your application has been published.

- (a) You may file voluntary amendments before making a full response to my examination report. We will publish with your application any new or amended claims you file voluntarily or as a full response, provided that they are received before preparations for publication are completed. It would help us when you file amendments before publication if you could **prominently indicate** in a covering letter whether or not the amendments are intended as a full response to the examination report.
- (b) If you file a full response to the examination report before your application is published I will consider it as soon as possible. However, if this would disrupt the publication of your application, I would have to delay

taking any action until the application had been published. This delay could be up to 3 months, depending upon when we receive your response.

- (c) There is another situation when there might be a delay between you filing a full response and the Patent Office responding to it. This would arise if you met all my objections but your application had not or had only recently been published. I could not report the outcome of my re-examination until I was satisfied that the search was complete for documents published before the priority date of your invention and that anybody interested in the application has had three months following publication of the application to make observations on the patentability of your invention.
- (d) Provided that the requirements of the Act have been met, I can send your application to grant as early as three months after publication. Before doing so I will bring the original search up to date and raise with you any further objection that might result from this top-up search. However, there is a possibility that at that time I may not have access to all the patent applications published after the priority date of your invention and of possible relevance to your application. If this is the case I would have to complete the search after grant and if necessary raise any new found novelty objection then.

Application No: GB0520991.1

Examiner: Mr Philip Osman

Claims searched: 1-14

Date of search: 19 January 2006

Patents Act 1977: Search Report under Section 17

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Relevant to claims	Identity of document and passage or figure of particular relevance
Y	1-3, 8,9,13	DE10123207 C1 (AUDI) See figures and English Language abstract
Y	1-3, 8, 9, 13	US5904370 A (STEINER et al) See figures and abstract
Y	1-3, 8, 9, 13	FR2771356 A1 (ECIA) See figures and English language abstract
Y	1-3, 8, 9, 13	DE1993429 A1 (SIEMENS) See figures and English language abstract

Categories:

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
&	Member of the same patent family	E	Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.

Field of Search:

Search of GB, EP, WO & US patent documents classified in the following areas of the UKC^X :

B5A; B7B

Worldwide search of patent documents classified in the following areas of the IPC

B29C; B29D; B60R

The following online and other databases have been used in the preparation of this search report

Online: EPODOC, WPI

Your ref : P353105GB
Application No: GB0520991.1
Applicant : Lear Corporation

Examiner : Mr Philip Osman
Tel : 01633 813776
Date of report : 23 January 2006

Latest date for reply: 2 October 2006

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Patents Act 1977 Examination Report under Section 18(3)

Inventive step

1. The invention as defined in claims 1-3, 8, 9 & 13 is obvious in view of what has already been disclosed in the following documents:

DE 101 23 207 C1 (AUDI)
US 5,904,370 (STEINER et al)
FR 2 771 356 A1 (ECIA)
DE 199 34 249 A1 (SIEMENS)

2. DE 101 23 207 C1 shows an airbag assembly in which a rigid substrate (1) is covered by an airbag membrane (5). Between the membrane and the substrate is a foam filler material (6) which breaks up when inflation fluid is supplied and allows the airbag to expand away from the substrate. The airbag membrane in this document is able to expand due to folds (9) moulded into the structure during manufacture. However, the remaining three documents all show airbags in which an elastic membrane is mounted onto a rigid substrate, and stretches to form an airbag on supply of an inflation fluid. It would appear to be obvious to use the elastic membrane of any of these three documents in conjunction with the foam-filled structure of DE 101 23 207, and hence claim 1 appears to lack an inventive step.

3. Any rigid plastic material would appear to be suitable for the substrate. The specific example of a thermoplastic material is mentioned in US 5,904,370. Claim 2 therefore also appears to lack an inventive step.

4. The selection of a thermoplastic elastomer or polyolefin for the covering, as defined in claim 3, appears to be natural given the requirement that the covering be capable of elastic deformation.

5. Since the core shown in the device of DE 101 23 207 C1 is a plastics foam, it seems natural to conclude that its density is lower than the solid plastics layer of the outer skin, as in claim 8, and the outer skin is not foamed (and hence not of a cellular nature) as in claim 9.

6. Since claim 1 lacks inventive step, it follows that Claim 13, to the use of such an airbag also lacks inventive step.